

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Please cancel claims 18, 20-22, 28-30 and 34-36 without prejudice and amend claims 1, 10, 19 and 37 as follows:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An image content providing method of providing an image content via a network from an image content providing apparatus to an image content reproducing apparatus, said image content providing method comprising the steps of:

requesting, via the stream distribution, distribution of said image content, said request sent from said image content reproducing apparatus to said image content providing apparatus;

transmitting, via the network by one of stream distribution, download distribution and package distribution, said image content to said image content reproducing apparatus, wherein for download distribution and package distribution said image content providing apparatus only transmits said image content and does not transmit advertisement images and for stream distribution said image content providing apparatus transmits said image content and the advertisement images transmitted thereto by an advertisement image providing apparatus,

wherein when said image content is transmitted via download distribution further including the steps of:

transmitting an advertising inserting condition to said image content reproducing apparatus;

detecting a position of inserting an advertisement image in said image content at said image content reproducing apparatus;

requesting [[an]] said advertisement image providing apparatus, having said advertisement image, to distribute said advertisement image to said image content reproducing apparatus and sending said advertising inserting condition to said advertisement image providing apparatus by said image content reproducing apparatus;

selecting said advertisement image to be inserted into said image content based on at least said advertisement inserting condition and a maximum number of distribution times and transmitting said advertisement image selected, by stream distribution via the network, to said image content reproducing apparatus at said advertisement image providing apparatus;

inserting said advertisement image transmitted to said image content reproducing apparatus at the position of inserting said advertisement image in said image content at said image reproducing apparatus; and

display thereof, and

wherein when said image content is transmitted via package distribution further including the steps of:

transmitting an advertising inserting condition to said image content reproducing apparatus;

detecting the position of inserting an advertisement image in said image content at said image content reproducing apparatus;

requesting an advertisement image providing apparatus, having said advertisement image, to distribute said advertisement image to said image content reproducing apparatus and sending said advertising inserting condition to said advertisement image providing apparatus by said image content reproducing apparatus;

selecting said advertisement image to be inserted into said image content based on at least said advertisement inserting condition and a maximum number of distribution times and transmitting said advertisement image selected, by stream distribution via the network, to said image content reproducing apparatus at said advertisement image providing apparatus;

inserting said advertisement image transmitted to said image content reproducing apparatus at the position of inserting said advertisement image in said image content at said image reproducing apparatus; and

display thereof; and

wherein when said image content is transmitted via stream distribution, during transmission detecting the position of inserting the advertisement image in said image content at said image content providing apparatus;

requesting the advertisement image providing apparatus, having said advertisement image, to distribute said advertisement image to said image content providing apparatus and sending the advertisement inserting condition to the advertisement image providing apparatus;

selecting said advertisement image to be inserted into said image content based on at least the advertisement inserting condition and a maximum number of distribution times and transmitting said advertisement image selected, by stream distribution via the network, to said image content providing apparatus at said advertisement image providing apparatus;

inserting said advertisement image transmitted to said image content providing apparatus at the position of inserting said advertisement image in said image content at said image content providing apparatus;

distributing, via stream distribution, the advertisement image from said image content providing apparatus to said image content reproducing apparatus; and restarting stream distribution of said image content from said image content providing apparatus to said image content reproducing apparatus when the distribution of the advertisement image finishes.

2. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 1, wherein when said image content is requested to distribute at said image content reproducing apparatus, said image content is selected and requested to distribute based on a title list which is information for viewing said distributable image contents to be transmitted from said image content providing apparatus.

3. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 1, wherein the position of said image content for inserting said advertisement image is detected based on advertisement inserting condition data having an advertisement image inserting position condition for designating the position of inserting said advertisement image and an advertisement image selecting condition for designating a category of said advertisement image capable of being inserted to said image content.

4. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 3, wherein said advertisement inserting condition data includes an advertisement image reproducing condition for designating a maximum period of time for reproducing said advertisement image when said advertisement image is inserted to said image content.

5. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 3, wherein when said advertisement image is requested to distribute at said image content providing apparatus, said advertisement inserting condition data is transmitted to said advertisement image providing apparatus and when said advertisement image is selected at said advertisement image providing apparatus, said advertisement image is selected based on said advertisement inserting condition data.

6. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 1, wherein when said image content is requested to distribute at said image content reproducing apparatus, viewer information of a viewer for utilizing said image content is transmitted to said image content providing apparatus.

7. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 6, wherein when said advertisement image is requested to distribute at said image content providing apparatus, said viewer information is transmitted to said advertisement image providing apparatus and when said advertisement image is selected at said advertisement image providing apparatus, said advertisement image is selected based on said viewer information.

8. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 1, wherein said image content providing apparatus comprises:
a main image content distributing apparatus; and
a plurality of deputy image content distributing apparatus;

wherein said main image content distributing apparatus selects one of the deputy image content distributing apparatus from said plurality of deputy image content distributing apparatus by a request of distributing said image content from said image content reproducing apparatus and said selected deputy image content distributing apparatus distributes said image content to said image content reproducing apparatus.

9. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 1, wherein said image content providing apparatus comprises:

a main image content distributing apparatus; and

a plurality of image content distribution splitter nodes;

wherein when said main image content distributing apparatus is requested to distribute said image content, said main image content distributing apparatus selects said image content distribution splitter node and distributes said image content to said image content distribution splitter node and said image content is distributed from said image content distribution splitter node to said image content reproducing apparatus.

10. (Currently Amended) An image content providing method of providing an image content from an image content providing apparatus to an image content reproducing apparatus, said image content providing method comprising the steps of:

requesting, via a network, to provide said image content from said image content reproducing apparatus to said image content providing apparatus;

providing said requested image content in its entirety and providing advertisement inserting condition from said image content providing apparatus to said image content

reproducing apparatus by one of download distribution and package distribution, wherein said image content providing apparatus only providing said image content and advertisement inserting condition and does not provide advertisement images;

for download distribution, the method further comprising the steps of:

detecting at said image content reproducing apparatus a position of inserting an advertisement image in said downloaded image content when said downloaded image content is reproduced at said image content reproducing apparatus, ~~wherein the position of inserting the advertisement image is a position where a scene is changed;~~

sending a request from said image content reproducing apparatus, via the network by stream distribution, to distribute said advertisement image to an advertisement image providing apparatus having said advertisement image to be inserted and sending the advertisement inserting condition to said advertisement image providing apparatus;

selecting said advertisement image to be inserted to said image content based on at least said advertisement inserting condition and a maximum number of distribution times and distributing of said advertisement image selected via the network by stream distribution to said image content reproducing apparatus at said advertisement image providing apparatus; and

reproducing said advertisement image when the position of inserting said distributed advertisement image is reached in reproducing said image content at said image content reproducing apparatus

for package distribution, the method further comprising the steps of:

detecting at said image content reproducing apparatus the position of inserting an advertisement image in said image content provided on a recording medium when said image content is reproduced at said image content reproducing apparatus;

sending a request from said image content reproducing apparatus, via the network by stream distribution, to distribute said advertisement image to an advertisement image providing apparatus having said advertisement image to be inserted and sending the advertisement inserting condition to said advertisement image providing apparatus;

selecting said advertisement image to be inserted to said image content based on at least said advertisement inserting condition and a maximum number of distribution times and distributing of said advertisement image selected via the network by stream distribution to said image content reproducing apparatus at said advertisement image providing apparatus; and

reproducing said advertisement image when the position of inserting said distributed advertisement image is reached in reproducing said image content at said image content reproducing apparatus.

11. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 10, wherein when said image content is requested to distribute at the image content reproducing apparatus, said image content is selected and requested to distribute based on a title list which is information for viewing said distributable image contents to be transmitted from said image content providing apparatus.

12. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 10, wherein the position of said image content for inserting said advertisement image is detected at said image content reproducing apparatus based on advertisement inserting condition data having an advertisement image inserting position condition transmitted from said image content providing apparatus for designating the position of inserting said advertisement image to said

image content and an advertisement image selecting condition for designating a category of said advertisement image capable of being inserted to said image content.

13. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 11, wherein said advertisement inserting condition data includes an advertisement image reproducing condition for designating a maximum period of time for reproducing said advertisement image when said advertisement image is inserted to said image content.

14. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 11, wherein when said advertisement image is requested to distribute at said image content providing apparatus, said advertisement inserting condition data is transmitted to said advertisement image providing apparatus and when said advertisement image is selected at said advertisement image providing apparatus, said advertisement image is selected based on said advertisement inserting condition data.

15. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 11, wherein when said advertisement image is requested to distribute at said image content providing apparatus, viewer information of a viewer utilizing said image content is transmitted to said advertisement image providing apparatus and when said advertisement image is selected at said advertisement image providing apparatus, said advertisement image is selected based on said viewer information.

16. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 11, wherein said image content is provided by said image content providing apparatus by subjecting said image content to download distribution to said image content reproducing apparatus.

17. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 11, wherein said image content is provided by said image content providing means by transmitting an information recording medium recorded with said image content to said image content reproducing apparatus.

18. (Canceled).

19. (Currently Amended) An image content providing system comprising:
an image content providing apparatus having an image content and having a function of providing said image content via one of package distribution and download distribution, wherein said image content providing apparatus does not provide advertisement images;

an advertisement image providing apparatus having an advertisement image to be inserted to said image content and having a function of providing said advertisement image, via a network by stream distribution, based on at least advertisement inserting condition and a maximum number of distribution times;

an image content reproducing apparatus having a function of receiving the image content in its entirety prior to reproduction, receiving the advertisement inserting condition from said image content providing apparatus, and reproducing said image content and said

advertisement image, wherein the function of receiving the image content includes (a) via package distribution when the image content is subjected to package distribution and (b) via download distribution when the image content is subjected to download distribution;

wherein said image content reproducing apparatus has a function of (a) acquiring said advertisement image from said advertisement image providing apparatus via the network by stream distribution during reproduction of the image content after transmitting said advertisement inserting condition to the advertisement image providing apparatus and (b) inserting said advertisement image into said image content and reproducing thereof.

20-31. (Canceled).

32. (Previously Presented) The image content providing method of claim 1, wherein said image content is a moving picture.

33. (Previously Presented) The image content providing method of claim 1, wherein said image content is one of a movie, a drama and an animation.

34-36. (Canceled).

37. (Currently Amended) An image content providing method of providing an image content from an image content providing apparatus to an image content reproducing apparatus, said image content providing method comprising the steps of:

requesting, via a network by stream distribution, to provide said image content from said image content reproducing apparatus to said image content providing apparatus;

providing said requested image content in its entirety and providing advertisement inserting condition from said image content providing apparatus to said image content reproducing apparatus and not providing advertisement images to said image content reproducing apparatus;

detecting a position of inserting an advertisement image in said image content previously provided when said image content is reproduced at said image content reproducing apparatus;

requesting, via the network by stream distribution, to distribute said advertisement image to an advertisement image providing apparatus having said advertisement image to be inserted and sending the advertisement inserting condition;

selecting said advertisement image to be inserted to said image content based on at least the advertisement inserting condition received and a maximum number of distribution times and distributing thereof via the network by stream distribution to said image content reproducing apparatus at said advertisement image providing apparatus;

reproducing said advertisement image when the position of inserting said distributed advertisement image is reached in reproducing said image content at said image content reproducing apparatus, wherein

providing the requested image content in its entirety to said image content reproducing apparatus includes (a) downloading via the network by stream distribution, the image content in its entirety to the image content reproducing apparatus when the image content is subjected to download distribution and (b) distributing the image content in its entirety to the

image content reproducing apparatus via an information recording medium when the image content is subjected to package distribution.